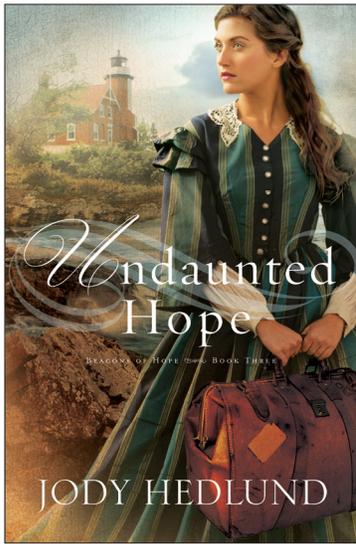




**QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH JODY HEDLUND**



**Undaunted Hope**

BEACONS OF HOPE #3

by Jody Hedlund

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**1. How did you come up with the idea for *Undaunted Hope*?**

For this third book in my BEACONS OF HOPE series, I wanted to pick a location that was different from the other books. The first two books, *Love Unexpected* and *Hearts Made Whole*, are set in the “mitten” of Michigan. So to add variety to the series, I decided to place *Undaunted Hope* in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula on Lake Superior.

In my research of Michigan lighthouses, I learned there are lighthouses dotted all over the shores of Lake Superior, as it was such a treacherous lake to traverse and an important waterway for steamers due to the area’s rich natural resources. As I studied the various lighthouses, I landed upon Eagle Harbor Lighthouse located in the Keweenaw Peninsula, a place rich in history and the makings of a really great story.

**2. What special research did you do in writing *Undaunted Hope*?**

I had the wonderful privilege of visiting Eagle Harbor and the lighthouse that serves as the setting for the novel. In fact, I was able to stay for a whole week in the assistant keeper’s cottage that now sits next to the lighthouse.

The large covered front porch of the assistant keeper’s house overlooks Eagle Harbor and offers a gorgeous view of Lake Superior! Every morning I woke up to the sound of the crashing waves, and every evening I watched the sunset. It was one of the most beautiful, peaceful places I’ve ever stayed.

Not only did I get to do in-depth research on the lighthouse (and walk around inside it as many times as I wanted), but I also was able to research the entire area, taking lots of pictures of the lake, flowers, wildlife, and the numerous waterfalls throughout the peninsula. It’s a remote wilderness part of Michigan that’s sparsely populated, and cold! I visited at the end of June and brought short-sleeve shirts. I had to wear sweatshirts almost every day instead.

**3. In your other BEACONS OF HOPE books, the heroines are inspired by real women keepers. Did you use a real lightkeeper as part of the inspiration for the heroine in *Undaunted Hope*?**

Most of us gravitate toward the stories that glamorize lighthouse life and honor the women who served in them. That’s only natural. And I hope in my other two books in this series I gave those women the laud due to them.

However, I didn’t want to neglect the women who served in lighthouses whose experiences weren’t quite so glamorous, who served even though they disliked the duty. One woman in particular inspired this story. Her name was Cecelia Carlson McLean. She was married to keeper Alexander McLean, who served at various lighthouses around Lake Superior. When she was interviewed later in her life, Cecelia was very forthright in stating that she hated lighthouses, that they were lonely places, and that she’d had to sacrifice a great deal to live in them. She claimed that if she had to do it over, she wouldn’t choose life in a lighthouse.

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Of course, her story made me think about the many hardships that light keeping entailed, especially for women—the extreme isolation, the lack of luxury, and the constant threat of danger. So out of Cecelia’s hardships, I created Tessa and tried to imagine the underlying motivations for what might cause someone to hate lighthouses. Although I had Tessa work through some of her fears and dislike of lighthouses, I’m sure most women like Cecelia took their resentment of lighthouses with them to the grave.

**4. What have you enjoyed most in writing this series?**

I’ve thoroughly enjoyed getting to visit the many lighthouses throughout the state of Michigan. Not only have I attempted to visit the lighthouses that are used as settings for the books but I’ve also been inspired to visit others. And every time I do, I learn a little bit more about how lighthouses were operated and have come to realize that each one is unique.

During the past summer of 2015 I toured several lighthouses, such as Tawas Point Lighthouse, St. Joseph Lighthouses, and Mackinac City Lighthouse. Each time I climb a tower, reach the top, and gaze out at the spectacular view, I’m amazed by the beauty. I never tire of the experience and can completely understand the fascination so many people have with lighthouses. I think I caught the “lighthouse bug” and will forever be visiting them!

**5. What do you hope readers take away from *Undaunted Hope*?**

I pray that this story will encourage readers with renewed hope. Just like Tessa, I pray that readers will find the strength to face their fears. We all have things that frighten us, and many times we find it easier to run away from those things. Sometimes, however, God calls us to walk directly into that thing we fear most. And He wants us to know that during those times, He’s walking right there beside us and will help us come out on the other side stronger as a result.